History

OF THE

First Presbyterian Church

HICKORY, N. C.

1873 - 1923

CHURCH ORGANIZATION

SESSION

Rev. E. M. Craig, D. D., Moderator.
Dr. W. B. Ramsay, Clerk.

G. W. Hall
H. E. McComb
W. B. Menzies
R. J. Reveley
N. M. Seagle
Dr. T. F. Stevenson
Dr. P. W. Troutman
J. J. Willard

BOARD OF DEACONS

Judge E. B. Cline, Chairman; R. L. Hefner, Vice-Chairman;
C. V. Garth, Secretary

N. W. Clark
G. W. Killian
D. M. McComb
K. C. Menzies
E. D. Yoder
G. O. Yount

Committee Chairmen

Finance—K. C. Menzies; Property—G. W. Killian
Publicity—J. J. Willard; Poor—E. D. Yoder
Church Treasurer—J. J. Willard
Trustees—Dr. Ramsay, Judge Cline, K. C. Menzies
Organist—Mrs. J. H. Hatcher

SUNDAY SCHOOL

R. J. Reveley, Superintendent; H. S. Balch, Asst. Superintendent;
C. V. Garth, Secretary and Treasurer

Teachers

Dr. W. B. Ramsay
Mrs. R. J. Reveley
Mr. H. S. Balch
Mrs. H. T. Williams
Mrs. W. B. Ramsay
Miss Rosa Lee Dixon
Miss Essie Seagle
Mrs. A. C. Kelly
Miss Frances Dixon
Mrs. George Bailey
Miss Amelia McComb
Mrs. C. V. Garth
Miss Helen Brandon
Mrs. W. B. Menzies
Mrs. Geo. C. Yoder

WOMAN'S AUXILIARY

Mrs. E. M. Craig, President; Mrs. W. B. Ramsay, Vice-President

Circle Chairmen

No. 1, Mrs. Lawrence Cline
No. 2, Mrs. A. C. Kelly
No. 3, Mrs. W. E. Gosnold
No. 4, Mrs. R. J. Reveley
No. 5, Mrs. Connolly C. Gamble

Historical Sketch of the First Presbyterian Church of Hickory, N. C.

By Dr. W. B. Ramsay Clerk of the Session

In preparing to celebrate today, the Fiftieth Anniversary of our church, we have searched the records with a view of setting forth some of the points of interest in the beginning and early struggles and steady growth of the church with the hope that we would be stimulated to greater efforts in the future.

Nothing will prove of more general interest than the following from the sessional records:

Organization

A petition was sent to the Presbytery of Concord, signed by 14 members of the Presbyterian church from different parts of the county, and a number of the most respectable citizens of Hickory (members of no church) requesting Presbytery to organize a Presbyterian church in Hickory.

After due consideration Presbytery granted the request and appointed Rev. W. A. Wood and Rev. G. M. Gibbs as a committee to visit the village at their earliest convenience, and if the way be clear, organize a church.

Whereupon, the committee met on the 18th day of March, 1873, in the Methodist church in the village of Hickory, and no obstacle being in the way, proceeded to the organization, when the following persons presented certificates of dismissal from their respective churches, viz:

Mrs. M. C. Baird from Rock Hill, S. C., Mrs. J. R. Bell from Lincolnton, Mrs. C. M. Gibbs, Miss C. S. Gibbs, Mr. R. W. Gibbs and Miss Anna T. Gibbs from Mocksville, Mr. J. B. Hussey and Mrs. J. B. Hussey and Mrs. Caroline Bost from Newton, Mr. J. G. Hall from Wilkesborough, Dr. B. F. Terry and Mrs. B. F. Terry from Hampden-Sidney, Va., and Mrs. I. A. Mobley from Charlotte.

These certificates being found in order were received and their names enrolled. A call being made for officers, the following persons were nominated for Elders and unanimously elected, viz: Dr. B. F. Terry, Mr. J. G. Hall and Mr. J. B. Hussey. Having but few male members, the election of deacons was postponed for the time. The above named members having signified their willingness to accept the office of Elder, the

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Chairman proceeded immediately to the ordination of the two last named (Dr. Terry having been previously ordained) after which the three were regularly installed into office according to the directions of our Book.

Two names were then presented for the newly organized church, viz: Piedmont and Gibbs Mission. The latter receiving a majority of votes was chosen as the name. Meeting closed with prayer by W. A. Wood, Chairman.

Thus the new church began its life, and with Rev. G. M. Gibbs as pastor and Mr. J. B. Hussey as Clerk of the Session. During the first year three new members were added and a movement started to secure a lot for a church.

The examination of the roll of our church today shows one grandchild, Miss Virginia Hall, as the only representative of the charter members.

Of the present membership we give the names of five who have been connected with the church the longest:

Mr. N. M. Seagle, April 5, 1874.

Mrs. Laura Johnston Totten, April 5, 1874.

Mrs. Mary Sloop, March 24, 1878.

Mr. H. E. McComb and Mr. D. M. McComb, March 8, 1879.

The first report of the Sunday School was in 1876 when there were 48 enrolled and the total gifts amounted to $14.53.

The name of the church "Gibb's Mission," was changed to "Hickory," in 1878. At the same time the congregation extended a call to Rev. T. G. Thurston, of Taylorsville, for one-third of his time at a salary of $250. The call was not accepted until a year later.

A lot was bought for the church from Henry W. Robinson at the corner of Twelfth Street and Ninth Avenue for $100. Trustees were elected to hold the property as follows: J. G. Hall, R. W. McComb and R. W. Johnston. The first church was erected on the lot facing Twelfth Street. The original building now owned by the Missouri Lutherans, still stands on the lot but has been turned to face Ninth Avenue.

Rev. L. McKinnon, Rev. R. Z. Johnston, Rev. J. M. Anderson and Rev. T. G. Thurston were invited to dedicate the new church on November 2, 1878. Mr. Thurston was the only one able to be present. The church was dedicated on the date set. The building cost $1,769.23. There was a debt of $739.61 which was assumed and paid by the following: Hall Brothers, R. W. McComb, R. W. Johnston, Mrs. Amelia Young, N. M. Seagle, J. V. Fisher, and A. McIntosh. The congregation worshipped in the Reformed church until the church was erected.

In 1881 the call to Mr. Thurston was amended calling for half his time at a salary of $375.

Mr. Thurston and his daughter, Allie, were drowned in March, 1884, in trying to ford Catawba River on their way to Taylorsville. This was a very sad and distressing end to a most useful life.

Rev. C. A. Monroe, S. S., became pastor April 2, 1885, this church paying a salary of $400, for half his time, the other half being given to Lenoir. Both churches called him for all his time in 1891. He accepted the call to Lenoir, terminating his relations with Hickory April 19, 1891.

Immediately steps were taken to supply the church, resulting in a call to Rev. J. Alston Ramsay, D. D., at a salary of $900. He assumed the duties as pastor June 5, 1891 and continued until his death Jan. 11, 1900. He was the first pastor called for all of his time. The church was greatly crippled financially during the winter of 1894, remembered as the year of a nation wide financial panic, and had to surrender a part of the pastor's time. The Newton church called for one fourth of his time. This relation continued through the rest of his pastorate. A Woman's Home and Foreign Missionary Society was organized Sept. 21, 1891. The women of the church were so possessed with the idea that women should keep silence in public that none was willing to assume leadership. Dr. Ramsay, the pastor, was elected and acted as the first president of the society. The Earnest Workers were organized about 1887, the first president being Mrs. M. E. Butler, and the first Manse was purchased and largely paid for by them. This property was on Eleventh Avenue between Fourteenth and Fifteenth Streets. Dr. Ramsay was the first pastor to occupy it.

For the second time the church was called to mourn the loss of a pastor by death, when Dr. Ramsay entered into his rest on Jan. 11, 1900.

Rev. W. T. Matthews, the next pastor, began his work April 4, 1900, and continued until Sept. 4, 1903. One of the outstanding things of this pastorate was the taking steps looking to a new church. The present church lot on the corner of Thirteenth Street and Thirteenth Avenue was purchased for $950. The relation between Newton and Hickory churches continued through Mr. Matthews' pastorate. He resigned to accept a call to Durant, Oklahoma.

On March 6, 1904, Rev. C. W. Trawick became pastor for all his time, the church having recovered and being able to pay a salary of $900. The present church building was begun, completed, and dedicated during this pastorate.

The records show that at a congregational meeting October

19, 1904, the first step to the building of a new church was taken in electing a committee of nine for that purpose, as follows: Judge E. B. Cline, Chairman; K. C. Menzies, T. J. Green, W. B. Menzies, A. McIntosh, Geo. W. Hall, H. E. McComb, W. B. Ramsay and H. C. Dixon. The church was completed and dedicated under the activities of this committee Dec. 2, 1906 as the following sessional records show: "Our new church having been completed and paid for, was dedicated to the worship of Almighty God on Dec. 2, 1906.

"Rev. W. W. Moore, D. D., preached the sermon and Rev. C. W. Trawick made the dedicatory prayer. E. B. Cline, representing the building committee, made a statement showing the cost and furnishings of the church to be $14,060. H. C. Dixon, on behalf of the Board of Trustees accepted the church keys from the building committee."

Mr. Trawick continued to serve the church until Sept. 1907, resigning on account of ill health. Rev. C. T. Squires served the church as supply during the last four months of this pastorate.

Rev. J. M. Wharey, S. S., supplied the church from Sept. 1907 to May 1908 to the delight and edification of the church. He instituted the household service which has been continued until this time.

For the next ten years, July 27, 1908 to Nov. 26, 1918, Rev. J. G. Garth was the pastor, this being the longest in the history of the church. He was called at a salary of $1,000 which was increased three times until it reached $1,500 during his last two years. During this pastorate the organ was installed, the church property was improved and additional real estate purchased. The Young People's and Sunday School Work showed a notable advance during these years.

The world war, into which our country was drawn, resulted in thirty of our young men enlisting, and the resignation of the pastor that he might enlist in over-seas Y. M. C. A. work.

We are glad to note here that all returned home without any fatalities, although Mr. Garth suffered a serious accident in the city of Charlotte, N. C.

The present pastorate began May 25, 1919. During these four years there has been a steady development in the church work with all departments well organized for efficient service. The number of members added to the church roll during this pastorate is one hundred and eighty-six. The salary offered Dr. Craig was $2,100 which has been increased twice, the present salary being $2,700.00 and Manse.

These pastors, differing in their talents, all filled their places faithfully, and were blessed of God in their labors for the upbuilding of His kingdom in our midst.

This history would not be complete without mention of the loyalty and devotion of the members of this church, men and women, whose self-sacrificing efforts have made possible the splendid progress of the church, and whose prayers and consecrated lives are our richest heritage.

The church has entertained Concord Presbytery on several occasions, and the Synod of North Carolina met in this church in 1914.

Today we are better prepared for a forward work than ever before, and we pray for God's continued blessing upon us.

The following members of this church have gone into the Master's service, or are in preparation:

Mr. Mattie Ingold Tate, M. D., Korea.
Mr. J. W. Hassell, Japan.
Mrs. Louise Dixon Crane, Africa.
Miss Ruby Satterfield, China.
Mrs. Eva Harris Clark, Grundy, Va., pastor's wife.
Rev. Bonnar Knox, West Virginia.
Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Ramsaur, Burkemont mission, last year.
Miss Grace C. Henderson, Assembly Training School, Richmond, Va.
Glenn O. Yount, Middle class, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va.

Table showing reports of the church at the end of each five years. The church was organized March 18, 1873 with 13 members. Three Elders were elected.

Year	Elders	Deacons	Members	S. School	Gifts
1878	3	2	21	81	$ 707.00
1883	5	5	36	87	510.00
1888	6	5	79	93	635.00
1893	6	6	116	89	1,416.00
1898	7	8	116	112	947.00
1905	6	6	137	103	1,667.00
1908	5	7	162	126	2,178.00
1913	6	6	231	242	3,146.00
1918	6	10	239	203	3,527.00
1923	9	9	355	326	*8,500.00

* estimated.

Sketch of the Woman's Missionary Society

By Miss Amelia McComb, Auxiliary Historian

The Ladies' Home and Foreign Missionary Society of the Hickory Presbyterian church was organized Sept. 21, 1891, by Rev. Alston Ramsay. There were thirteen charter members as follows:

Rev. J. A. Ramsay, Mrs. H. C. Hamilton, Mrs. R. W. Johnston, Mrs. H. C. Dixon, Mrs. N. M. Seagle, Mrs. L. G. Hay, Mrs. L. M. Totten, Mrs. J. A. Ramsay, Miss E. Bonney, Miss Annie Irvine, Mrs. A. H. Crowell, Mrs. H. E. McComb, Mrs. P. C. Hall.

The officers of the society were three, a president, a vice-president and a secretary-treasurer. The meetings were held at the residences of the members, taken in alphabetical order, until the new church was built. Since then the Pastor's Study or church parlor has been the place of meeting. The monthly dues were ten cents per member and this was divided equally between Home and Foreign Missions.

This society was one of the first in Concord Presbytery to ask that a Union be formed. Presbytery granted the request and the Hickory society had a delegate present at the organization of the Union May 8th, 1906, at Salisbury.

The Union's fourth meeting was held in the Hickory church April 5-7, 1910. In 1918 the name having been changed from Union to Presbyterial, this organization again met in the Hickory church.

The weeks of prayer, for Home Missions in the Spring and for Foreign Missions in the fall are observed.

The Mission Study Classes have been taught.

The leaders have always been much interested in the mountain schools—Plumtree and Lees McRae, in which several of the young women of the congregation have taught. The Barium Springs Orphanage receives a liberal offering every year.

The Survey is generally taken. Two who have had their names on our roll have gone to the Foreign Field—Dr. Mattie Ingold Tate to Korea in 1897 and Mrs. Louise Dixon Crane, who sailed on the 30th of January, 1912, for Africa.

September, 1916, the Ladies auxiliary was divided into circles. At that time there were forty-two names on the roll. At the present, March, 1923, there are seventy-five names enrolled. There are five circles, a Young Woman's Circle having been added last year.

The Auxiliary gives to all the causes of the church, according to the Assembly's plan.

The amount contributed by the Circles for 1921-1922 was $842.78.

The Auxiliary is steadily growing in efficiency and service.

PASTORS AND SUPPLIES

Rev. G. M. Gibbs	March 18, 1873-March 24, 1878.
Rev. T. G. Thurston	Mar. 31, 1879-Mar. 2, 1884, Drowned.
Rev. C. A. Monroe, D. D.	April 2, 1885-April 19, 1891.
Rev. J. Alston Ramsay, D. D.	July 5, 1891-Jan. 11, 1900. Death.
Rev. W. T. Matthews	April 4, 1900-Sept. 4, 1903.
Rev. C. W. Trawick	March 6, 1904-Sept. 1907.
Rev. C. T. Squires	Supply, summer 1907 in pastor's absence.
Rev. J. M. Wharey, D. D.	Supply, Sept. 1907-May 1908.
Rev. J. G. Garth	July 27, 1908-Nov. 26, 1918.
Rev. E. M. Craig, D. D.,	May 25, 1919.

RULING ELDERS

J. G. Hall	March 18, 1873-July 31, 1897. To Lenoir.
J. B. Hussey	March 18, 1873-June 1, 1879. To Raleigh.
Dr. B. F. Terry	March 18, 1873-April 20, 1877. To Charlotte.
R. W. Johnston	Oct. 1, 1876-April 11, 1911.
R. W. McComb	Oct. 1, 1876-Feb. 4, 1881. Death.
P. C. Hall	March 17, 1879-Feb. 2, 1908. Death.
H. C. Hamilton	Jan. 26, 1881-June 17, 1899. Death.
H. C. Dixon	Nov. 19, 1882-Jan. 21, 1908. Death.
Dr. T. T. Hay	May 15, 1887-Dec. 7, 1890. To Raleigh.
J. E. Haithcock	March 1, 1891-Nov. 18, 1915. Death.
Dr. W. B. Ramsay	April 8, 1894.
A. McIntosh	June 21, 1903-Sept. 15, 1908. To Ocala, Fla.
Dr. T. F. Stevenson	July 14, 1907.
H. M. Doll	Nov. 21, 1907-Aug 6, 1922. Death.
G. W. Hall	April 25, 1909.
S. A. Grier	June 14, 1915-Dec. 31, 1916. To Barium Springs.
Dr. P. W. Troutman	June 3, 1917.
David Spence	June 3, 1917-July 11, 1917.
N. M. Seagle	Jan. 23, 1921.
W. B. Menzies.	Jan. 23, 1921.
R. J. Reveley	Jan. 23, 1921.
J. J. Willard	Jan. 23, 1921.

CLERKS OF SESSION

J. B. Hussey	March 18, 1873-April 18, 1874.
J. G. Hall	April 18, 1874-Feb. 4, 1881.
H. C. Hamilton	Feb. 4, 1881-March 17, 1889.
H. C. Dixon	March 17, 1889-Jan. 21, 1908.
Dr. W. B. Ramsay	Feb. 23, 1908.

DEACONS

N. M. Seagle	May 18, 1874-Jan. 23, 1921. Elected Elder.
R. W. Johnston	May 18, 1874-Sept. 16, 1876. Elected Elder.
A. McIntosh	Oct. 1, 1876-June 21, 1903. Elected Elder.
H. E. McComb	Mar. 17, 1879-April 25, 1909. Elected Elder.
F. A. Wiley	March 17, 1879-May 3, 1884.
L. M. Totten	Nov. 19, 1882-Jan 20, 1903. Death.
L. G. Hay	May 15, 1887-June 1905. Death.
G. C. Bonniwell	Aug. 2, 1891-Oct. 3, 1900. To Raleigh.
G. W. Hall	Nov. 21, 1897-April 25, 1909. Elected Elder.
Arthur M. Ingold	Nov. 21, 1897-Feb. 3, 1909. To Morganton.
Judge E. B. Cline	Mar. 30, 1904.
W. E. Holbrook	Oct. 19, 1904-Oct. 30, 1911. To Greenville, S. C.
W. B. Menzies	Oct. 19, 1904-Jan. 23, 1921. Elected Elder.
W. A. Hall	April 25, 1909-April 5, 1919. Death.
D. M. McComb	April 25, 1909.
G. W. Killian	May 7, 1911.
J. J. Willard	June 6, 1915-Jan. 23, 1921. Elected Elder.
E. D. Yoder	June 6, 1915.
H. W. Warner	June 3, 1917-Jan. 26, 1920. Death
Dr. Glenn G. Scott	June 3, 1917. Non-resident.
W. S. Taylor	Jan. 23, 1921-March 14, 1921. Death.
K. C. Menzies	Jan. 23, 1921.
Glenn O. Yount	Jan. 23, 1921. At Theological Seminary.
C. V. Garth	Jan. 23, 1921.
N. W. Clark	Jan. 23, 1921.
R. L. Hefner	Jan. 23, 1921.

TREASURERS FROM 1873 TO 1923

N. M. Seagle, H. E. McComb, Geo. W. Hall, Judge E. B. Cline, W. A. Hall, W. B. Menzies, J. J. Willard.

SUPERINTENDENTS OF SUNDAY SCHOOL FROM ORGANIZATION TO THE PRESENT

J. G. Hall, J. E. Haithcock, H. M. Doll, Dr. W. B. Ramsay, Geo. W. Hall, R. J. Reveley.